

4 (Amended). The x-ray mask blank according to [any one of] claim 1, wherein said x-ray membrane comprises a silicon carbide film.

5 (Amended). An x-ray mask having an x-ray absorbing film pattern on an x-ray membrane supported by a frame body, wherein said x-ray mask [is manufactured by the use of said x-ray mask blank according to claim 1] has a surface condition satisfying the following expression:

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$$(Ra_{\max} - Ra_{\min}) / (Ra_{\max} + Ra_{\min}) \leq 0.15$$

where Ra_{\max} denotes a maximum value of Ra of a surface roughness (Ra: center-line average roughness) on a plurality of points within a predetermined area on said x-ray membrane, and Ra_{\min} denotes a minimum value of Ra of the surface roughness (Ra: center-line average roughness) on a plurality of points within a predetermined area on said x-ray membrane.

REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action of April 2, 1999.

In the Office Action, the Examiner objects to informalities in the specification and claims. Accordingly, Applicant is amending the specification and claims to correct grammatical errors therein. It is believed that no new matter is being added to the application in these amendments. Accordingly, it is requested that these amendments be entered and allowed, and the objection withdrawn.

The Examiner also objects to Claim 5 as being unclear and indefinite and the improper definition of a process because it recites no steps. Claim 5, however, is not directed to a process but to an x-ray mask. Applicant has now amended Claim 5 to recite the elements of the mask. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that this objection has now been overcome, and the Claim is not indefinite, unclear or improper.

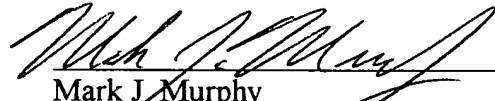
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It is believed that the application is now in a condition for allowance and should be allowed.

Favorable reconsideration is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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